

MS

MUTUAL SUPPORT

ARMED FORCES MULTIPLE
SCLEROSIS SUPPORT GROUP

March

e-newsletter

2024



MS Society

Multiple Sclerosis Society. Registered charity nos. 1139257/SCO41990.
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Newsletter Articles To Be Sent To:

Bill Land

comms@mutual-support.org.uk

Newsletter Deadline:

Monday 27th May 2024

Cover Photo:

Jerusalem, Easter 2024 while the conflict in Gaza rages on.



Scan this QR code to see Mutual Support in the Care & Support section of the MS Society.

Mutual Support exists for serving and ex-serving members of the Armed Forces and Reserves, their dependents and carers affected by MS.

FOREWORD

Dear all

We are sending you the newsletter rather early this time, this is because there is something else I (Ed) have to attend to, so I hope I haven't made any glaring mistakes. The next edition will be June 2024 and the deadline will be Mon 27th May.

Now here we are almost entering the second quarter of 2024 already! The co-ordinating team, especially the events team are busy with the final preparations for the spring Residential meeting which will take place from Friday 29th March until Sunday 31st March 2024, see P2 for details. This is also the Easter weekend.

This brings me to consider the conflict between Israel and the Palestine which still remains unresolved. That along with the other hostilities and events around the world increases the risk of Nuclear escalation. There is something called the '**Doomsday clock**' which is a formula used by the world's science and security community that has become a universally recognised indicator of the world's vulnerability to global catastrophe. The clock has now been set to just 90 seconds before midnight which is the closest to global catastrophe it has ever been.

On a good note, Jim Watson has stepped up to the mark and is now our Group Co-ordinator (what we used to call chairman) Jim and his wife Jill have been members since May 2010 so he is already very familiar with how our group works, especially as Jill is already our Events Manager. Welcome Jim.

When I was a teenager, before joining the army I was a shepherd. Why am I telling you this? There is an article on P11 that caught my attention about recessive genes brought into western Europe by animal herders some 5000 years ago. Researchers have found a link to these ancient genes and the origins of MS in modern humans.

MS really can be the most peculiar, unpredictable, often baffling and sometimes the most scary and cruel of conditions. We have collected a few quirky quotes, facts, figures and observations that have been heard over the years. If you are new to the world of MS you are inevitably going to hear a lot of contradictory and rather unsettling things about this minefield you are about to enter. In all honesty, if it sounds too extraordinary to be true then it probably is nonsense. See p20 and trust your instinct.

Our FREE support & respite weekends are really the most informative and helpful source of information and comradeship, we always have a selection of inspirational guest speakers. We aim to bring you a friendly informal and entertaining experience. So many times we have heard from new members in particular about how re-energised and re-connected they feel. It pleases us to see that Mutual Support has given a lot of members the opportunity to form life long friendships.

Not forgetting this e-newsletter which always contains a wide variety of helpful information and links to organisations that we as armed forces personnel, dependants and veterans can gain exclusive access to.

If you are a member of our members only Facebook group, you can access an archive of all the previous newsletters in the **Files** tab at the top of the page. You can also request back copies from me comms@mutual-support.org.uk. To join our Facebook group simply email: membership@mutual-support.org.uk

Bill Land (Ed)

Spring Support and Respite Weekend 2024

The next Residential Meeting will be from Friday 29th March until Sunday 31st March 2024 at the [Hayes Conference Centre](#) in Derbyshire.



The application proforma was sent out by email in January. The closing date for applications is 8th March 2024. We anticipate that bookings will be fully subscribed, if you missed the email and would like to attend then contact Jill Watson by email immediately at eventsmanager@mutual-support.org.uk if there is a space left you can have it or we can add your name to the reserve list in case there is a late cancellation.

Please note; cancellations cost Mutual Support £200 per person. Your Coordinating Team are aware that exceptional events like Illness and Family Bereavements will necessitate cancellation. So please advise us immediately if you have places booked and then cannot attend so that we can offer your booking to someone else.



We have been Nominated for the Celebrating Forces Family Awards 2024

Mutual Support has been nominated for the [Military Family Charity of the Year award for the 2024](#) Celebrating Forces Families awards.

The awards are to celebrate the fantastic work that our armed forces families do and to say thank you for all the hard work. SO THANK YOU, WE APPRECIATE YOU.

The finalists will be announced towards the end of January, so fingers crossed we are one of the lucky 3 category finalists that make it through.

We already know the value of Mutual Support after being honoured to be the winners of the Soldiering On Awards 2023. So keep your fingers crossed.



Did you know, we are also on twitter?
Follow us @ twitter.com/mss_support



Fundraising

Great news, we have recently received two unexpected donations:

Firstly a very generous personal donation from **Mike Robbins** for the sum of **£5000.00**. My goodness we were incredibly surprised and delighted to receive this incredible gesture. [Mike](#) is one of Mutual Support's longest standing members and has volunteered for us in many capacities, so Mike will know just how beneficial this money will be to enable us to deliver the very best we can for our members. Thank you Mike.

We also received a donation from the [Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust](#) (AFCFT) for the sum of **£16,000.00** and again we are so pleased and honoured to know that the AFCFT recognises us a worthy cause. To find out all about the AFCFT please see the feature below. Thank you AFCFT.



There are several ways you can donate to Mutual Support.
To see the options, either click on or scan the QR code:

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST **Thank You to our generous benefactor**

Our vision is for a thriving Armed Forces community that is valued and supported within our society

Got a question? Our FAQ page features many of the most common questions and queries we receive.

[READ MORE](#)



The Map of Need

Explore the needs of veterans and their families across the UK, based on public data



Programme Evaluations

Discover the impact that our grant funding programmes have had on Armed Forces communities



Service Families

Discover how our funding has supported Armed Forces families



Veterans and carers

Discover the impact that our funding has had on veterans and those who support them



Delivering locally

Explore our approach to supporting real change at a local level

Check it out here:



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INFORMATION AND ADVICE
SINCE 1999

Keep up-to-date with the latest information by subscribing for our free weekly newsletter. You can read the latest issue online [here](#), and sign up for your own copy [here](#).

Veteran's Orthopaedic Service



The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt
Orthopaedic Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust



Lt Col Meyer developed the Veterans Orthopaedic Service in 2014 the first service of its kind within the UK. It was initially aimed at Veterans with hip and knee arthritis but has now grown to involve other orthopaedic subspecialties.

Patients have attended the service from across the UK as well as from overseas.

As well as an NHS surgeon, Lt Col Meyer is a serving Army orthopaedic surgeon with one tour to Iraq and three to Afghanistan. Has travelled extensively and visited centre's of excellence in the UK and abroad.

The Veterans' Orthopaedic Service is open to those who are serving or veterans who have served in the UK military, including National Service, who require treatment for arthritic lower limb problems, especially those requiring hip and knee replacements.

The Veterans' Orthopaedic Service clinics are held every Thursday afternoon, and twice a month on Friday mornings. During the clinic, patients will see one of our Veterans' Service doctors.

If you would like to access the Veterans' Orthopaedic Service, please read the following information carefully:

Referrals start at your local GP Practice (except Northern Ireland) who will follow guidelines that are specific to your local area. In some areas, patients may be required to go through a triage service in order to assess clinical need before a referral. Where necessary, prior funding arrangements with your local Health Board or Commissioning Group will need to be in place.

The Royal British Legion may support travel costs for veterans which can be arranged at an RBL branch prior to appointments or admission.

In almost all cases you will initially require a referral from your GP but don't be surprised if your GP is not aware of this service, if that is the case ask your GP to take a look at the [Veterans' Orthopaedic Service](#).



ssa
afa

the
Armed Forces
charity

Free short breaks 2025

**For serving and reservist families who have
a child with an additional need or disability.**



FANDF
Giving a voice to Forces
families with additional
needs and disabilities

Applications to **SSAFA** for free short breaks in 2024 have now closed. Demand is high for these breaks. Applications will re-open at the beginning of 2025. If you are not a member already, you may want to consider signing up to the [Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum \(FANDF\) mailing list](#) so you can be the first to hear about application openings.

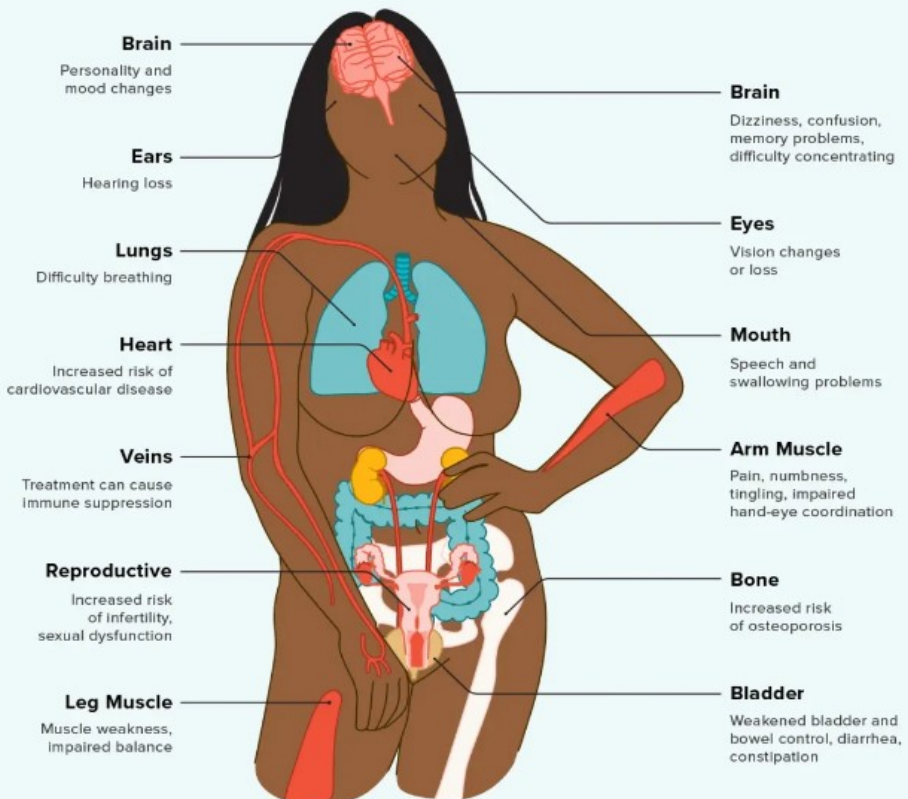
Interestingly, the recent addition of Jim Watson joining us as Group Coordinator means that our coordinating team now has four couples: Jim & Jill Watson, Jack & Julie Russell, Fiona Dangerfield & Rachel Harris and Bill & Silke Land.

There is also another married couple coming to join us as publicity volunteer & fundraising volunteer plus one other as social media volunteer just as soon as they have been approved.

With Graham Duncan as membership volunteer, Anita Rose helping with events and Andrew Williams & Helen Spear as our support volunteers we have a winning team.

The contact details for all our volunteer team are always published on the last page of this e-newsletter should you need to speak to any of us.

Effects of Multiple Sclerosis on the body



But I'll look disabled using this – or will I?

by Mike Robbins

40 years ago I experienced the first symptoms of MS, when a Cpl in the RAOC, and after a year of progressively worse symptoms it was finally diagnosed. However, once treated with a heavy dose of steroids, I was able to continue with my career, until I reached WO1(RLC) and had a medical discharge.

I am fortunate that am still somewhat mobile, I swim and go to the gym to try to keep my legs and muscle strong, but the prime thing is that I use a rollator which mitigates the chance of falling massively.

My Mum sadly was getting weaker as she got more mature, but insisted of only using a walking stick. I tried to get her to use a rollator, but her reason for not trying one was "I'll look old or disabled".

She then fell twice, broke both hips, spending time in hospital and rehab etc, and then on return still only used sticks.

I asked my Mum where she'd least like to spend her nights, Hospital was her answer, and I managed to get her using a rollator, albeit somewhat late.

I really hope that this will encourage people to use rollators as and when the time comes, be it due to age or MS and save themselves potentially many problems.

Oh, and with a rollator, you can sit when you become tired, put shopping in the basket, and stow it in a car with ease.

I was able to contribute actively in several positions for the wonderful work of Mutual Support committee including publicity, BAOR STC, support team, sponsorship events and seven years as speakers coordinator.

Whilst keeping as fit and healthy as possible, there has been marked progression over the last few years, and it has certainly affected my mobility quite noticeably. I've progressed from a walking stick to crutches, and then I decided to start using a rollator. Believe me, this was a 'step' that I'd endeavoured to avoid, and the hardest thing was the acknowledgement of the fact that I wasn't quite as mobile as before, and needed a bit of help.

Rollators primarily give the impression that they are used by 'mature' people, and that was something I had to get my head around, as a relatively young recently retired person.

But blow the false vanity – when I heard someone say that they wouldn't try it 'because it would make them look disabled' my response, whilst one of empathy, I thought don't you look really more disabled staggering along on your crutches.



Even with crutches one is prone to falls, and the inherent problems that could be caused to carers/partners in the event of one, all through 'False Pride'. So what if you believe that people might be potentially thinking negative thoughts about you: if they are, are they worth knowing?



I took into account the following points to make my day to day life easier:

Safety, the capability to avoid a fall, good posture to ameliorate back problems, a seat to use when I am tired, the ability to carry shopping or other such items, something that was light and easy to stow and fold, and something that was going to enhance my independence and confidence – oh, and also looks quite good.

The City Walker ticked all of these boxes. I found that Googling for the best deal saved me a good amount of money from the originally quoted price, the help that it has given me has helped me negotiate my way as I progress through my life with MS.



I just hope that sharing my experiences in this way will empower people, where appropriate, to enhance their progression with confidence and a positive outlook – these are attitudes that are needed to achieve the best out of the life we have been given.

Mike Robbins

This picture shows Mike on the left back in 1995 with his CO in the centre and Kim Bartlett on the right with a cheque presentation for Mutual Support.



Vulnerability
Registration
Service

The VRS Healthy Homes initiative

Providing easy access to additional services

The **Vulnerability Registration Service (VRS)** is a not-for-profit organisation, designed to help people who have circumstances that need to be taken into consideration by the businesses or organisations that they have contact with. There is no cost to the people who register.

In partnership with Healthy Homes Solutions Limited (HHS), the VRS have set up a pilot in a number of regions in the UK, to present an easy way for VRS members to register for a range of additional services that are free or at a reduced cost for vulnerable homes. We call this the VRS Healthy Homes Initiative.

The VRS and Healthy Homes are committed to ensuring digital accessibility for people with disabilities. Therefore if you require a braille, large print or the information provided for deaf or hearing impaired users, please email: info@vrshhs.org or call **0800 151 3014**.

For further information click 'register' and complete the form. A member of the Healthy Homes team will be in touch.

[Register Here](#)

By providing the following information the Healthy Homes team will be able to discuss your needs simply and effectively, when discussing which services you wish to apply for when the team contact you. Please complete all the details required or if you would rather talk to a member of the team, call **0800 151 3014**.

PhD project assessing the health and wellbeing of the UK LGBT+ military community

A new PhD project focusing on the health and wellbeing of UK LGBT+ serving and ex-serving personnel (veterans) has started at the [King's Centre for Military Health Research](#) (KCMHR)



Over the next three years, this PhD study aims to provide an overview of the health and wellbeing among UK LGBT+ serving and ex-serving members of the British Armed Forces, including exploring the prevalence of, and identifying the risk and protective factors associated with various health and wellbeing outcomes. The PhD study will apply both qualitative and quantitative methods (in-depth interviews and statistical analyses). Go to [Health and Wellbeing Cohort Study](#).

Want to know more?

For updates on this study and other work being conducted at KCMHR please go to [@kcmhr](#) on X (formerly Twitter) and take a look at the [most recent blog posts](#).



Royal British Legion Urges Veterans Affected by the LGBT Ban to Claim Support

24 years since the lifting of the military LGBT ban, the Royal British Legion is urging affected veterans to now apply for non-financial restorative measures and express interest in the upcoming financial award scheme.

The RBL remains concerned about the imposition of a cap on compensation payouts.

Many of those who stepped-up to serve prior to 2000, experienced criminalisation, loss of earnings and pensions, and abuse because of their sexuality.

A review into the ban completed by Lord Etherton last year, recommended to the Government that a scheme be set-up to compensate military personnel who were affected.

Continued.....

Non-financial restorative measures include a letter of apology from Service Chief of Staff, replacement beret or cap badge and a written reproduction of the Prime Minister's public apology.

The RBL is concerned by the inclusion of a £50 million cap to the total amount of compensation paid.

Without knowing how many people have been affected by the ban, setting a limit on financial awards could mean veterans miss out on payments that truly reflect their losses.

To register interest for financial award and apply for further support, services and non financial restorative measures, please visit: [Restorative Measures application and registration of interest – for anyone impacted by the Ban \(mod.uk\)](#)

The Royal British Legion is available to support affected LGBT veterans. Please contact: **0808 802 8080**.



What do we do?

We provide financial and holistic support to help children (up to the age of 25) of Naval families, serving and veterans.

How to get help?

You can ring our office and speak to a caseworker Available from **9.00am to 4.00pm Mon – Friday**, one of our case working team will discuss your needs and send you a form to complete, or click below and fill out the form and we will be in touch. You can also go to RN FPS (Naval Family Service & People Support), SSAFA, RBL or one of the other Naval Charities.

[ONLINE FORM](#)

Alternatively call **023 9263 9534** or email: caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk

Email campaign archive:

[join our mailing list](#)

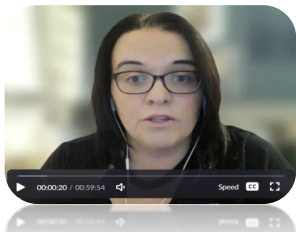


ARMED FORCES DAY

29 June 2024



Full details will be in the next edition June 2024



Living well with MS

This one hour webinar from the MS Society is packed with a wide range of interesting advice, tips and tricks to help you to live well with MS. Click on the link above, then if it asks you for a passcode, it is:

lifehacks2024!

Upcoming episodes will focus on [Living Well](#), [Work & MS](#) and [Talking MS & Work Group session](#). You can also join our [Living Well](#) group.

You can get involved in [co-production](#) and find out about opportunities to share your experience and shape information and services available to the MS community.

Links: [Access Card](#), [CEA Card \(Cinema\)](#), [Disabled Person's Rail Card](#) and the [ATG Tickers Access scheme](#).

Don't forget you can contact our **MS Society Helpline** to reach one of our three fantastic nurses. You can contact them via **email** or **Facebook** or call: **0808 800 8000**.

You can also get in touch with one of the brilliant MS benefits advisors from the **Disability Law Service** by calling our Helpline on **0808 800 8000** or email: msbenefitsadvice@dls.org.uk.



For everyone with a soldier in their life

armyandyou.co.uk

The [Army & You](#) website is packed with useful news, features, advice, competitions, giveaways, real life stories and so much more.

Subscribe to the FREE [Army & You magazine](#) delivered to your door quarterly or read it online [here](#) including all back issues.

Army & You is made possible by the loyal backing of a number of Forces-friendly businesses, schools and charities. We salute each organisation for their support.

Scientists crack mystery of how MS gene spread

There are about twice as many cases of multiple sclerosis among people in north-western Europe, including the UK and Scandinavia, compared with southern Europe.

Researchers from the universities of Cambridge, Copenhagen and Oxford spent more than 10 years delving into archaeology to investigate why.

They discovered that genes which increase the risk of MS entered into north-western Europe about 5,000 years ago via a massive migration of livestock from the areas we know today as western Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.



At the time, the gene variants carried by the herding people were an advantage, helping to protect them against diseases in their sheep and cattle.

Nowadays, however, with modern lifestyles, diets and better hygiene, these gene variants have taken on a different role.

In the present day, these same traits mean a higher risk of developing certain diseases, such as MS.



The research project was a huge undertaking - genetic information was extracted from ancient human remains found in Europe and Western Asia, and compared with the genes of hundreds of thousands of people living in the UK today.

‘Find sweet spot’

Prof Lars Fugger, paper author and MS doctor at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, says the discovery helps "demystify" the disease.

"MS is not caused by mutations - it's driven by normal genes to protect us against pathogens," he explains.

Vaccinations, antibiotics and higher standards of hygiene have changed the disease landscape completely - many diseases have disappeared and people are living decades longer.

The researchers say modern immune systems may now be more susceptible to autoimmune diseases, like MS, where the immune system attacks the body rather than protecting it.

Drugs currently used to treat MS target the body's immune system, but the downside is the risk of suppressing it so much that patients struggle to fight off infections.

"When treating it, we are up against evolutionary forces." Prof Fugger says.

"We need to find the sweet spot where there is a balance with the immune system, rather than wiping it out."

This article has been extracted from the BBC News website.

To read the article in its entirety please go to:



Read the latest MS news

Get up to date with all the latest MS news on research, treatments and campaigning. And find out what we're doing together to stop MS.

Read all the latest [HERE](#) including an interesting feature about how a recent study has revealed people with MS in the UK are less likely to be prescribed Disease Modifying Treatments than some other countries.



Bladder & Bowel Community

Get your 'I Just Can't Wait' Toilet Card

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- Discreet, clear communication when you just can't wait to use the toilet
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The longest lived people in the world tend to live in volcanic regions and eat a diet raised mainly on volcanic soil.



Be sure to visit our Mutual-Support Facebook group for the latest news and views.

Look what I got for Christmas

My wonderful wife Silke gave me this incredible gadget last Christmas.

It's a powered 'Seated Mini Exercise Bike'. I have MS and live a fairly sedentary lifestyle, I find it difficult to exercise due to fatigue and impaired mobility.



The lack of exercise has made me very unfit and lacking stamina, this has impacted my quality of life.

I had previously bought myself a cheap small manual pedal exerciser as an attempt to get my legs working, but I found that I just can't coordinate my legs to move in that cyclical manner anymore, which was a disappointment. So I searched the internet to see if there is a powered version that would do the work for me. Yes there is such a device great! But I was put off buying one as they are rather pricey.

I was really chuffed to receive it, and tried it out straight away. I had a bit of a setback, the machine would not work as it was unable to resist my very stiff legs that would go into a spasm as soon as it started. Very disappointed again.

But I didn't give up, this machine has a range of programmable low impact exercise routines which is a fantastic feature of course, I experimented with some of the programmes and eventually found that setting it to a slow speed with no fancy routines worked for me as that would not provoke my muscles to spasm.

I've been able to use the machine everyday, my quadriceps really burn when I use it which is a long forgotten feeling. I can feel the benefits, I find that my legs are much more relaxed and don't tend to spasm as much as they did. I can even see that there is some muscle definition starting to return.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not skipping and dancing around like a spring chicken. There's been no improvement to my mobility, but I have found that when I am standing I have far less falls. I think that must be because the legs are stronger and less prone to giving way beneath me now.

Oh and I actually quite enjoy that burning in my muscles, it is something normal rather than the nasty MS sensations I have put up with for so long and I don't need as much physiotherapy as before.

If you have problems with your legs like me then I can highly recommend the 'Seated Mini Exercise Bike' despite its price.



All the best
Bill.

Do you have any handy tips or tricks to share?
Do you use gadgets or technology to help you?

Let us know

email: comms@mutual-support.org.uk



RAF Benevolent Fund to launch LGBTQ+ Telephone Friendship Groups

The RAF Benevolent Fund is launching a new Telephone Friendship Group aimed at LGBTQ+ veterans in the RAF.

The initiative comes following the release of [The Etherton Review](#) in July 2023, which highlighted the deeply upsetting and unfair way in which the LGBTQ+ community were treated in the Armed Forces prior to the year 2000 and the repeal of the so called 'gay ban'.



*Caption: 'Isolated No More'
Art by David Tovey*

Furthermore, a [study](#) also released last year by Northumbria University into the enduring impact of the 'gay ban' upon our veterans and their families, revealed that 84.4% of:

LGBTQ+ veterans affected by the ban reported feeling lonely and 62.2% socially isolated, a consequence of decades of employing camouflage techniques to hide their sexuality.

As an organisation, the RAF Benevolent Fund strives to be inclusive and supportive for all members of the RAF Family and is expanding its successful Telephone Friendship Groups service, aimed to improve loneliness and isolation within the veteran community. The Fund is in the process of creating a Group specifically for the LGBTQ+ community, providing a safe and supportive environment to talk to others and build new friendships.

If you would like to take part in the Telephone Friendship Group, or know anyone who may be interested, please contact support@rafbf.org.uk.

The RAF Benevolent Fund provides financial, emotional, and practical assistance to serving and retired RAF personnel and their families. This includes grants to help with financial difficulty, mental health support, Airplay youth clubs, and more.



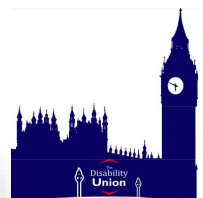
A member of
Disability Rights UK

We're bringing Disabled People together to build a brighter future

**Disability & Democracy- Chat about
Disability, politics and news in the UK**

That's why more people are joining every day,
will you be next?

JOIN US IN THE FIGHT FOR INCLUSION!



To stop MS, we need to find treatments that slow or stop progression for everyone. That's why research is so important. Find out how your support helps clinical trials.

Over 130,000 people live with **multiple sclerosis (MS)** in the UK. It's different and unpredictable for everyone, making it hard to know how it'll progress. At the moment, existing drugs only work on one aspect of MS - the immune system.

To stop MS, we also need to find ways to **repair myelin**, the protective coating around nerves, damaged in MS. To do this, we need to connect research from the lab right through to the clinic. We need to understand things like how damaged nerves signal for help and how myelin-making cells are activated.

With your help, we're funding pioneering research. Developing the treatment pipeline from lab research to clinical trials and one day delivering a treatment for myelin repair.

Research such as **Dr Selinda Orr's** is looking at specific proteins in the brain and spinal cord and the role they play in myelin repair in MS.

And right now, the team at the Cambridge Centre for Myelin Repair are testing to see if the combination of two existing drugs can **help the brain regenerate myelin**. The research is now in an ongoing phase 2 trial. Which means a small group of people are taking the drugs to find out if they're safe and effective for people with MS.

We're making real progress in all areas of myelin repair research. Will you donate today to help us continue to build the connections between MS, its causes, and how we can stop it?



Stopping MS would improve all our lives

"It's important to research MS because it has such a deep impact. It doesn't just affect the person who has MS, it affects the family and the extended family too."

Nikoma was diagnosed with **relapsing remitting MS** in 2018. He and Simone had been married for two years and they were expecting their first child. Nikoma's diagnosis affected their whole family. But they're hopeful that new research will not only stop MS, but its knock-on effects too. **Read Nikoma and Simone's story**



What is MS?

Three steps to stop MS

Clinical trials



Questions about MS?

0808 800 8000



Chat to people online

Join our forum



Sign up for our newsletter

Stay in touch

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy



Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO or HBOT, also called high dose oxygen therapy (HDOT)) involves breathing oxygen through a mask in a pressurised chamber, similar to a diving bell.

Whilst anecdotal reports suggest the treatment can be helpful for some people with MS, particularly with [fatigue](#) and [bladder symptoms](#), research into hyperbaric oxygen therapy in multiple sclerosis has not found scientific evidence that it is effective.

In the UK, hyperbaric oxygen therapy is available through most [MS Therapy Centres](#). Treatment usually consists of an initial course of around 20 sessions, each lasting an hour, spread over one month. Follow-up treatment is then needed at less frequent intervals.

MS Therapy Centres are local charities that provide a range of non-drug therapies for people with multiple sclerosis. Each Therapy Centre will vary in what it offers to people, but they typically include services such as [physiotherapy](#), [hyperbaric oxygen therapy](#), [yoga](#), [reflexology](#), [Pilates](#) and more. Usually, you do not have to have MS to use the services.

MS Therapy Centres often also provide help through drop in sessions or support groups. In some UK regions, MS Specialist Nurses have their offices and hold clinics in MS Therapy Centres as well.



Most, but not all Centres belong to the umbrella group - [Neuro Therapy Network](#), who represent 50 therapy centres around the UK and Channel Islands.



More than 20
physical and
complementary
therapies



Centres across
the UK, in
Jersey and
Gibraltar



Supporting
more than
15,000 people
every week

MS Therapy Centres across the UK are shown on our searchable [map of MS services](#).

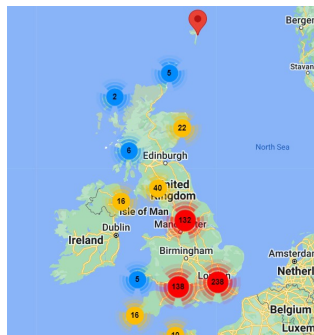
MS Services near me

Search for a service that is near you

Postcode or town

Distance

Choose the service you are interested in





Our 2024 events programme kicks off with The Big Event, Birmingham

Come along to our flagship event held at the NEC on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 May 2024, to see the largest display of cars and adaptations available on the Motability Scheme.

[Join us at The Big Event →](#)

Benign Multiple Sclerosis

You are probably well aware of the differing stages of MS. But it is not quite as straight forward as we might think. There isn't really a typical path that MS takes. However, people can be diagnosed at any stage of MS. Quite rarely children can be diagnosed with MS, this is called Paediatric Onset MS (POMS) but mostly the first diagnosis is the Relapsing Remitting form (RRMS) which often goes on to become secondary progressive MS (SPMS). Some older people are diagnosed with Primary Progressive MS (PPMS) right from the onset. It is quite common for people to have Progressive MS and still have relapses without any remission. But the most unusual form of MS is Benign MS which usually presents as just one onset of MS symptoms and then it stays that way without any further relapse or progression.

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War on Fraud!

It is important to reinforce that Mutual Support does not endorse any kind of commercial enterprise and does not subscribe to any political allegiance.

It is interesting to learn of something that may effect some of our members. The Government is currently in the process of passing a bill through Parliament that will allow the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to monitor the bank accounts of people who are in receipt of benefits such as [universal credit](#), [employment and support allowance](#) and [pension credit](#). Banks will also be obliged to monitor their customers who are on these benefits, and report to the DWP if a person exceeds the savings limit of £16K.

Read more at:

PositiveMoney 



WE ARE A TEAM OF RESEARCHERS

We work with economists, academics, journalists, policy makers and the general public to bring about a fairer money and banking system for all.

Please consider joining our growing group of students, grandparents, economists, journalists, dreamers and realists – all striving for a fairer, greener and safer economy.

Amendments to the bill having passed the second reading in the House of Lords, will subject benefits recipients to scrutiny over savings accounts and overseas travel. These additions coincide with a myriad of legislation to reform the welfare system in an attempt to get people into work and 'crackdown' on fraudulent welfare claims. At the same time Rishi Sunak has promised to reduce taxes by [cutting disability benefits](#).

If you are alarmed at the prospect of these initiatives and would like to register your disapproval, there are two petitions that you can sign:

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-the-government-from-spying-on-all-of-our-bank-accounts>

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/650940>

While the government continues to pursue those in receipt of benefits in an attempt to weed out fraudulent claimants, It is noticeable that fraudsters have been able to steal billions of taxpayers' money during the Pandemic.

The treasury has written off £4.3bn of Covid loans so far.

The cost of fraudulent loans is estimated to be £4.9bn - 11% of the total given out which is expected to top £20bn, (mainly on Bounce Back loans) that will be written off due to fraud. Over a quarter of the £1bn given to banks by taxpayers has so far been lost on fraudulent loans.

"It should be a source of enduring shame to Rishi Sunak that he has casually written off £4.3bn of taxpayers' money." Says Lord Agnew as he resigns.

See the **BBC NEWS** report here: bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics

This article is for interest only and is not intended to have any political bias. Any perceived political allegiance is unintentional and does not necessarily reflect the views of Mutual Support.

Multiple Sclerosis is Baffling!

For every one male with MS there are three females who have the condition.

The incidence of MS among the armed forces is more common than in the civilian community

In the 1930's Cobra venom was used in an attempt to treat MS

More than 130,000 people in the UK have MS.

The first case of MS was Lidwina the Virgin, who lived in Schiedam, Holland. In 1395, age 16 years

The cause of MS is still unknown there is no cure but there are some drugs that can delay it's progress

In recent years Goat Serum has been trialled as a treatment for MS

MS is more common in countries furthest from the equator

People from all ethnic backgrounds can get MS

In the UK people usually find out they have MS in their 20s 30s 40s or 50s

MS is the most common central nervous system condition that affects young adults

It is believed that vitamin D deficiency can contribute towards developing MS

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Hyperbaric Oxygen therapy can ease MS symptoms

Bladder weakness is probably the most commonly reported MS symptom

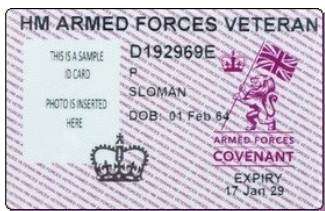
A large number of the general public don't know there is a difference between MS and ME

When you have MS it is for the rest of your life but you will not die from it

The country that has the highest rate of MS per capita in the world is Canada

Studies have found that MS is much less common in coastal communities that eat a lot of oily fish

Gained from a variety of sources, for your interest only, probably all factual but please use your own judgement.



HM Forces Veteran ID Card

The long awaited UK veterans' ID card, first announced in early 2018 is now finally available.

All service leavers since 2018 have been issued with the ID card automatically in addition to their MOD Form 90.

Now If you are a veteran who left the armed forces before 2018 you can at last apply for the official MOD Veterans' ID Card.

Sceptical? There are already several so called veterans' ID cards available, but all of them have been produced for commercial reasons with the promise of discounts and freebies. The official MOD endorsed HM Forces Veterans ID card will allow former personnel to easily verify their service to the NHS, their local authority, charities, polling stations etc helping them to access support and services. It is expected that as this new ID card becomes more recognised it will grant the holder to many more benefits and concessions. [Check what you can do with a veterans ID card.](#)

How to get your Veterans ID Card

You can apply for **FREE** via the [Gov.UK](#) website, a paper-based application process will also be made available for veterans who are unable to use the online service.

Apply for an official HM Forces Veterans' ID Card:

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